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By Liam Clymer

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HOMOPHOBIC JUDGE UNDER FIRE

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# 5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY LIAM CLYMER

Need a break from the political whirlwind? From thinking about whatever bizarre, obviously false claims Trump keeps making about people eating the pets of Springfield? We get it. What emerged during the epic face-off between Trump and Harris was a reminder as to what's at stake during this election — everything. And while getting out to vote is crucial, November is a ways away. Take a moment to recharge and return with fresh energy, ready to tackle what's next.



Affirmations' 2023 Big Bash gala. Courtesy photo

## Celebrate at Affirmations Studio 35 Gala

In order to properly honor 35 years of service to the community, Affirmations, Ferndale's LGBTQ+ community center, is going all out with a gala. With the Detroit skyline as the backdrop, attendees will reflect upon the legacy and future of the organization in style.

"This year's gala is especially significant as we are celebrating a milestone of 35 years," Senior Marketing Manager Marisol Dorantes said. "Studio 35 will be unlike any of our past events. We chose a theme and activations that prioritized celebration, camp and the commemoration of memories." Studio 35 Gala will feature a strolling dinner, a caricaturist, a photo booth and a dance floor. Be sure to mark your calendars for an opportunity "to celebrate our wins and joyfully connect with our community."

Sept. 28, 7 p.m. - 12 a.m., *Iridescence & Amnesia* at Motor City Casino (2901 Grand River Ave., Detroit). More details can be found at [goaffirmations.org/affirmations-gala](http://goaffirmations.org/affirmations-gala).



A craft event at SCRAP. Courtesy photo

## Support LGBTQ+ Artists

With the Funky Ferndale Art Fair, complexity and experimentation are the basis of the whole operation. Yes, the event is an art show, but it also encourages, well, funkiness, as artists are judged by how distinct and boundary-pushing their pieces are. Sept. 20-22, hours vary by day, West of Woodward on Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Learn more at [funkyferndaleartfair.com](http://funkyferndaleartfair.com).

If all this art talk has you inspired to flex your own art muscles, look no further than SCRAP Creative Reuse's Queer Crafternoon. The organization focuses on allowing you to create freely without the guilt of waste. SCRAP utilizes upcycling to provide manufactured items and materials that you can repurpose into something new. "I started Queer Crafternoon with the goal of creating a low-barrier, relaxed space where community and creativity could combine," said Education Coordinator Jonathan Brant. Sept. 29, 3-5 p.m. at SCRAP Creative Reuse (4567 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor). Save your spot at [bit.ly/3XFMdTu](http://bit.ly/3XFMdTu).



## Connect with Queer Techies

Entering the tech industry is a feat easier said than done. Factor in being an out member of the LGBTQ+ community, and a difficult task just became even harder. But fear not, with 50,000 members in cities across the globe, Out In Tech aims to empower LGBTQ+ people within the industry by ensuring they're seen and heard. Out In Tech's Detroit chapter is hosting "Get Hired: Job Search Tech Talks" on Sept. 24. The event will provide insight on what goes into a good interview, how LGBTQ+ folks can use tech to their advantage when finding jobs and how to increase confidence overall. Take back power and blow through barriers by connecting with a network of LGBTQ+ techies.

Sept. 24, 6-7 p.m., 118 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Register at [bit.ly/47qr0Qo](http://bit.ly/47qr0Qo).





Jay Kaplan. Courtesy photo

## Own the Night with 'Once Upon A Show Tune!'

Show tunes are in the blood of every gay and on Thursday nights, Ann Arbor's North Star Lounge brings that to life. Performer Jay Kaplan said that the upcoming "Once Upon A Showtune!" event showcases a star-studded lineup of performers. "Our cabaret show in Ann Arbor is part of an almost 20-year collaboration with my dear friend Jeffrey Willets, who had the idea of us putting together programs of show tunes," Kaplan said. "We are joined by accompanist Nick Fredericks and percussionist Jesse Gibbs at the North Star Lounge for an evening of songs from Broadway musicals." On Sept. 26, pull up a chair, snag some of Michigan's best vegan cuisine and settle in to experience "why these songs are meaningful to us in our lives."

Sept. 26, 7-10 p.m., North Star Lounge (301 N. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor). More information can be found at [nstarlounge.com/events/onceuponashowntune](http://nstarlounge.com/events/onceuponashowntune).



Sabin performs at Five15. Courtesy photo


## Get into Halloween Early

Calling all spooky season fans! The time has come to test your horror movie knowledge, and where better than in a space with drag queens and fellow members of the queer community? So before Royal Oak institution Five15 hosts the "Halloween, Horror Movie and Hocus Pocus" drag trivia night on Oct. 2, study up on your Final Girls, monster movies and slasher icons. Veteran Five 15 drag performer Sabin will emcee, and you know she'll get you into the Halloween spirit.

Or if trivia isn't your style, check out the return of "Sip, Swish, and Stroke," a drag painting event on Oct. 12 where queen Kooki Plaider will teach you the step-by-step process of bringing the Sanderson sisters back to life... at least on canvas.

Oct. 2, 7 p.m., Five15 (600 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak). Snag your seat at [five15.net/reservations/event/4584](http://five15.net/reservations/event/4584).





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# Homophobic, Racist Oakland County Judge Investigation a Reminder to Vote Smart

Kathleen Ryan used gay slurs aimed at County Executive Dave Coulter

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

Late last month, Kathleen Ryan, an Oakland County Probate Court Judge, was removed from her docket pending an investigation by the Michigan Supreme Court centered on recordings of Ryan using gay slurs and racist comments about Black people. In the recordings, Ryan made several graphic statements about Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter and called Black Americans “lazy.”

Probate Court Administrator Edward Hutton told WXYZ-TV that he created the recordings and sent them on to Supreme Court Chief Justice Elizabeth Clement, Coulter and others, months after Hutton filed a notice of sexual harassment to Oakland County Chief Probate Judge Linda Hallmark that has yet to be addressed.

Among Ryan’s “colorful” commentary: “Put that in your fucking ass and stuff it,” she said, directed at Coulter. She also said Coulter was “more concerned about the fucking AIDS vaccinations” and called him a “skinny white girl.” She referred to another, undisclosed person as a “fucking cocksucker.”

On the topic of Black people, Ryan claimed in the recordings that Black people from countries outside the U.S. are “better” and added, “If you’re an American Black person, then you’re a fucking lazy piece of shit.”

She fully acknowledged that she is racist. “I’m not systemically racist,” she said. “I’m a new racist. I never was, but now I am because you’re shoving this shit down my throat, making allegations that you don’t know shit about. You’re telling me who I am and you’ve never fucking met me.” Oakland County includes more than 170,000 Black residents, according to 2020 U.S. Census data.

Let’s be clear. Bigots and racists aren’t new (even “new racists”). Is anyone surprised to hear that one of our neighbors would say these things in what she presumably assumed was a private conversation? Of course not. We all have the internet (and a relative or two who keeps things spicy



at the Thanksgiving table). But most people we know — and most people we know *of* — do not have the kind of outsized power to impact the daily lives of regular people as a judge.

Here are just a few of the kinds of cases probate court judges focus on: juvenile delinquency, abuse and neglect, adoptions, administration of estates and trusts, guardianships, conservatorships, and committing mentally ill individuals to hospital care.

It’s not a stretch to imagine the kind of damage an admitted racist and clear homophobe could inflict on

the life of a Black or LGBTQ+ person standing in front of her bench.

“It’s a painful reminder that ugly and hateful views are still out there,” Coulter told me in a recent call. “Our community is still subjected to this, even in this day and age. It can still happen.”

Coulter said that as a gay man, he’s used to being called names occasionally, so while he is angry, it isn’t focused as much on the things Ryan said about him. It’s about her role in the community he serves. “This was a judge. Someone who people trust to be an arbitrator of

their cases and they may not have gotten that from her. So, I wasn’t thinking so much of myself,” he explained. “It’s the families, especially Black families, LGBTQ+ families, who have been in front of this judge. They may not have received the kind of independent and objective judge that they deserve.”

It wouldn’t be the first time. A 2020 Reuters investigation revealed that problematic judges frequently go unchecked in the U.S. legal system. “In the past dozen years,” the report reads, “state and local judges have repeatedly escaped

public accountability for misdeeds that have victimized thousands. Nine of 10 kept their jobs — including an Alabama judge who unlawfully jailed hundreds of poor people, many of them Black, over traffic fines.”

That judge, Les Hayes, sentenced Marquita Johnson, a single mother, to nearly 500 days in jail for failure to pay traffic tickets, a sentence longer than the jail time the state allows for negligent homicide. While she was incarcerated, Johnson’s three children were sent to foster care, including a

See **Judge Ryan**, page 26



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# LGBTQ+ Studies at Michigan Universities Shine Light on Overlooked Queer History

From communications classes to entire LGBTQ+ minors, students have an array of options



**BY LIAM CLYMER**

In an election year where LGBTQ+ identity is politicized and often at the center of debate, education on LGBTQ+ issues is critical. Many Michigan universities are offering LGBTQ+ courses and educational opportunities to combat a wave of assumptions and hurtful rhetoric.

The University of Michigan,

Michigan State University, Grand Valley State University and Eastern Michigan University all offer some form of LGBTQ+ or queer studies minors. However, each school's course offerings and resources vary.

Grand Valley's on-campus connection to the LGBTQ+ community is hard to miss. The university features the Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center,

which resides in the Kirkhof Center, a student engagement hub right at the center of campus.

Grand Valley Program Director of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Dr. Julia Mason said that the center's location is intentional. "It has a very visible physical presence; it's not like some campuses where centers are sort of tucked away or in a basement," she said. "It's a beautiful, bright

space and centrally located. I think that says something about how Grand Valley values the work that they do and the importance of making that space welcoming."

From history to psychology, Mason said the university features LGBTQ+ courses in general education and across different majors to expose those who might not have originally considered LGBTQ+ topics to

new ideas. "By offering courses at an introductory level and upper division level, it allows us to sort of meet students where they are," Mason explained. "The students in that intro class, they may be in there because it fulfills a particular gen ed category, but then they get really interested and excited. Or, for some students, it's something they hadn't been able to think about academically in their high



school or K-12, particularly because of the environment that we're in."

Grand Valley isn't the only university with LGBTQ+ opportunities across different fields of study. Nadine Hubbs, a women's and gender studies and music professor at the University of Michigan, said the sheer number of openly LGBTQ+ professors and instructors across the entire campus inspired the creation of the minor and how it's be structured.

Hubbs said that LGBTQ+ topics are interdisciplinary. To pursue a minor in LGBTQ+ studies at Michigan, a student has to complete five courses related to the topic, but the way in which they go about doing this is up to the individual. Much like Grand Valley, courses in other fields with a connection to LGBTQ+ topic can apply. Post baccalaureate, students can embark on a similar process to earn a graduate level certificate.

Offering these programs brings awareness to LGBTQ+ history, Hubbs said. "Students should know that LGBTQ+ people have a history," she said. "We have been a people without a history."

Hubbs added that understanding the history of constructed identities of LGBTQ+ individuals has changed over time is "good training" for any student. "It's really good training for any historian to take LGBTQ+ studies to get what it means when we say, 'the past was different,'" Hubbs said. "As I always tell my students, historical difference is just as big as cultural difference. We can't presume that we understand these folks from our own self-understanding, and we must not."

This challenging of societal constructions of identity that is core to Michigan's program can have students "stretching their brains" and questioning the labels they present with, but in the end, it leaves students with a richer and freer understanding of sexual identity, Hubbs said.

Over at Eastern Michigan University, a course focused on queer communication — led by an instructor who understands firsthand the challenges facing the community — has been put back on the fall schedule after a five-year hiatus. A renewed interest in the topic — and the right instructor becoming available — has set the stage for its return.

Instructor Lee Schwab believes the

course's return is well-timed, given the current political climate. "This class couldn't come back at a better time, when we're facing a litany of state legislators across the nation proposing bills to suppress LGBTQ+ communication," Schwab said. "A big part of LGBTQ+ communication is our expression, right? So, state legislators trying to propose bills to limit gender-affirming care for minors and for adults is keeping the whole community suppressed in that way."


When it comes to the kind of


*"It's really good training for any historian to take LGBTQ+ studies to get what it means when we say, 'the past was different.' We can't presume that we understand these folks from our own self-understanding, and we must not."*

— University of Michigan professor Nadine Hubbs

collaborative conversations central to Schwab's course format, maintaining a safe environment is a two-way street. Schwab said that the space created in their classes is often defined by the eagerness of their students to discuss these topics. "I think the students we have today are more politically engaged than ever before," Schwab said. "They want to talk about their identities, they want to talk about where they fit in the world. I think this class offers a space to have those conversations about the


See **LGBTQ+ Courses**, page 22





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# ‘Sweat’ Show Review: Queer Club on Steroids

Charli XCX and Troye Sivan ignite Detroit with explosive tour debut

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

If you popped on Grindr at around 8:20 p.m. on Saturday anywhere in Detroit, you saw a grid of faces and torsos that signaled Something Very Gay Is Happening Right Now. Twinks, twunks, daddies in twink clothes. People of every gender variety. Last night’s trick. That night’s trick. Your ex-boyfriend. So much mesh and glitter and harnesses. Lime-colored everything, everywhere.

You know who and what I’m talking about because you were probably there (where else would you be?). The gathering spot: Little Caesars Arena, which felt less like an arena and, as it brought Charli XCX and Troye Sivan together, more like a place of worship for nearly two hours during the launch of the Sweat tour.

If you aren’t queer and know at least one queer person, chances are you saw *that* Instagram story: Charli XCX enshrouded in a lime curtain inscribed with “brat” that lifted, revealing the British electro-pop performer and producer, who took Detroit queers to one of the biggest gay clubs they’d ever experienced. The show hadn’t even started (actually, in the halls of LCA, maybe it had), but when I pulled aside local drag queen Purrrspective, she already had the perfect description: “It’s like Pride!”

An arena show usually requires a high-budget spectacle, but Sivan and Charli’s lo-fi, industrial approach at the Sweat show delivered a level of authenticity, raw energy and club-kid edge that money can’t buy. Recently, Lindsay Zoladz of The New York Times likened attending a Charli XCX concert to experiencing “semi-legal warehouse raves.”

My friend offered an even more vivid comparison. When



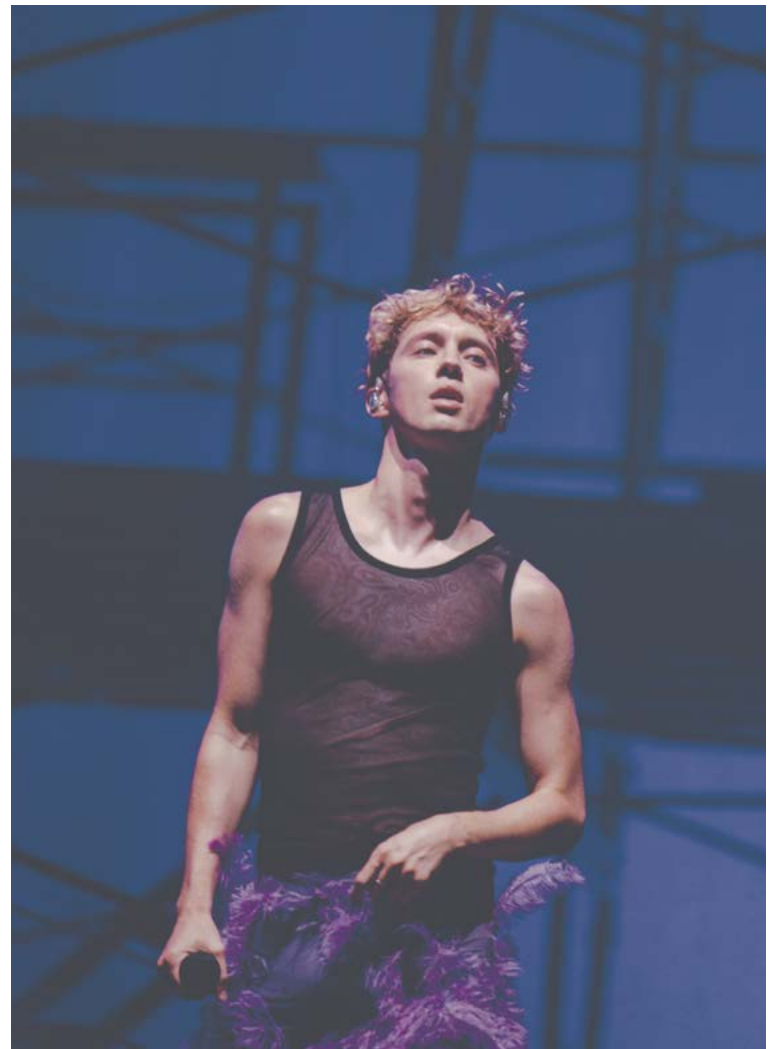
Charli XCX and Troye Sivan during the launch of the Sweat tour in Detroit on Saturday, Sept. 14. Photos: Henry Redcliffe

Charli XCX appeared later in the performance wearing a dress crafted from tattered white fabric reminiscent of something out of a Guillermo del Toro film, I jokingly texted him: “folklore.” He replied: “If you put Taylor Swift in a garbage disposal.”

In a sense, the concert was the antithesis of a Taylor Swift performance: as stripped back of a major arena show as I’ve ever seen. It was an event that plunged you into the muck, demanding you get your hands dirty, and left little room for contemplation.

From the moment Sivan took the stage, you were seized by raw sensuality and sheer attitude.

He eased the audience in with “Got Me Started,” which included one of many crotch-grab moments and an ensemble of all-male dancers who said “gay sex” with their breezy choreography before expressing it more literally later in the show in ways that I once could only imagine for any show, let alone an arena-sized one: Sivan miming a blowjob on the microphone. Sivan making out with a male dancer. Sivan



simulating butt-fucking as a different male dancer got behind him, thrusting. In case you still had any questions about what kind of show you were at, the red lights were Steamworks red and there was a tunnel of cages bridging the main stage to the in-the-round stage, which suggested its own kind of sex appeal.

The energy surged to new levels when Charli XCX did emerge. The show stayed horny (and later got hornier), but it also morphed into the rave Zoladz promised it would, as Detroit proved it *is* brat,

the term that defined the summer thanks to her album of the same name. By design, the show was organically laid-back: aside from the headliners, the throbbing lights did the heavy lifting over a simple multi-platform stage. If you were the only gay person not there, imagine a night out at Menjo’s but on steroids.

After Charli and Troye each performed songs from their solo albums, they came together on

See **Sweat**, page 28



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## CREEP OF THE WEEK

# Donald Trump Hates Taylor Swift, Loves Laura Loomer. We'll See How That Works Out For Him.



BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

OK, so let me see if I have this right. Disgraced former president Donald Trump hates Taylor Swift, one of the most beloved people in the country.

Swift, as I am sure you know, has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris. So now Trump has declared publicly on Truth Social that he hates her. It would be funny if, you know, this man wasn't in a tight race for President and if so many of his supporters weren't violent psychopaths.

But who needs Taylor Swift when you've got Laura Loomer?

Congratulations if you're asking, "Who is Laura Loomer?" That is the correct answer. Because if no one knew her we'd all be better off.

“

*Imagine now what a second Trump term would look like. The people in his administration will be people like Loomer.*

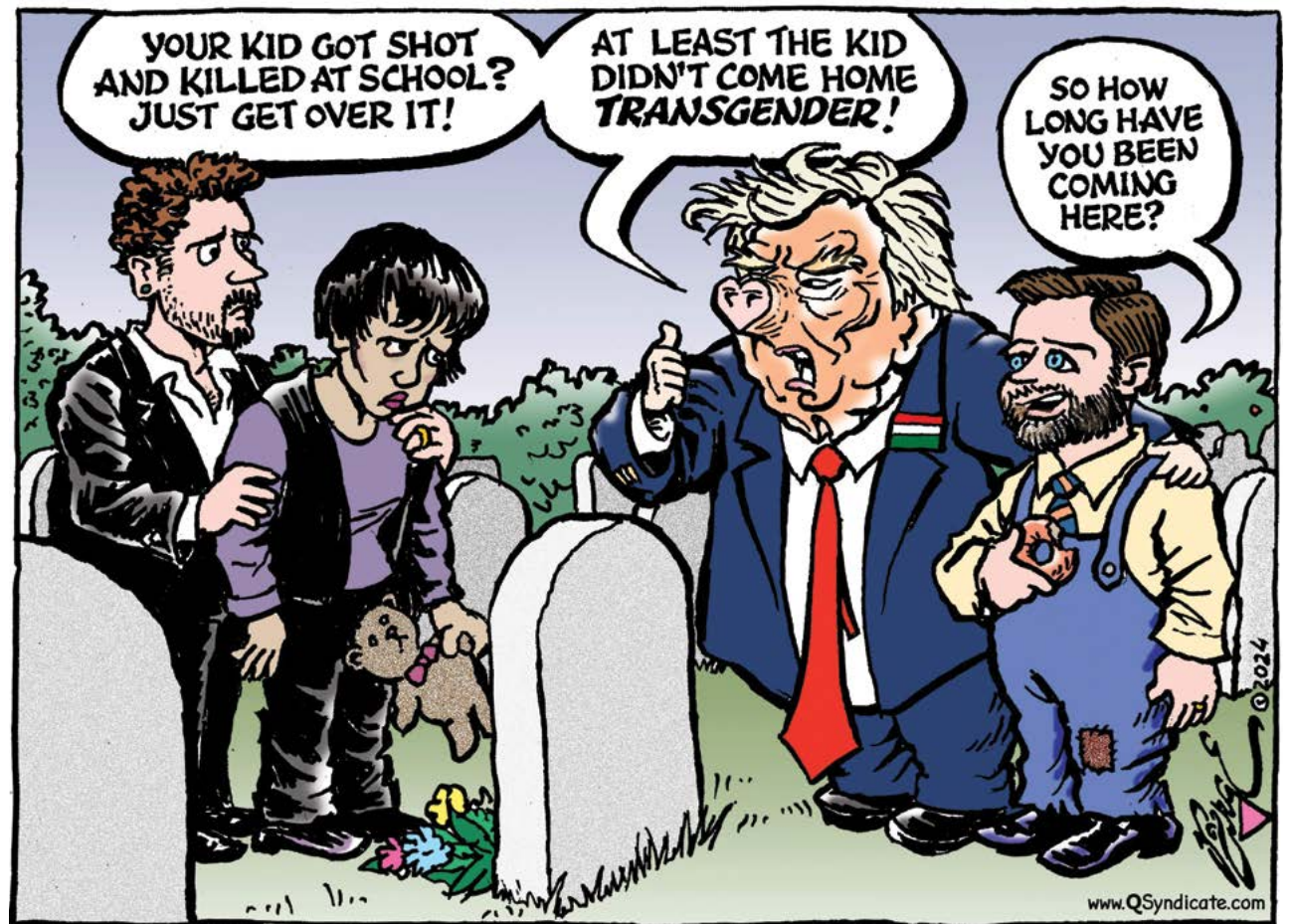
Alas, now that Loomer is apparently Trump's new BFE, it's kind of important to expose what a vile person she is.

In 2020, Loomer ran for Congress as a Republican in Florida and lost to her Democratic opponent, Lois Frankel. She ran for office again in 2022 and was defeated in the primary but has never conceded the race, claiming it was stolen.

Since then, she's basically been a professional shit-stirrer. She's a conspiracy theorist, racist, Islamophobe and homophobe.

One of Loomer's pet conspiracies is that Sept. 11 was "an inside job."

Guess who Trump brought as his date to the Sept. 11 memorial ceremony? Yep. Loomer. He also took her with him to the Sept. 10 debate against Harris. The fact that Loomer apparently has unfettered access to Trump is



making Republicans nervous.

Even Republicans don't even like her, including Trump sycophants like Sen. Lindsay Graham and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Loomer recently posted on social media that a President Harris White House "will smell like curry & White House speeches will be facilitated via a call center and the American people will only be able to convey their feedback through a customer satisfaction survey at the end of the call that nobody will understand."

Greene responded via an NBC report with, "This is appalling and extremely racist. It does not represent who we are as Republicans or MAGA. This does not represent President Trump. This type of behavior should not be tolerated ever."

And she's right! That it shouldn't be tolerated. But it sure does represent Trump and his MAGA Republican Party.

Sen. Graham called Loomer's racist post "abhorrent" and essentially said that Trump should distance himself from her.

Loomer, who has called the United States "a giant, third world shit hole," responded by calling Graham "disloyal to Trump and the American people." on X. But she didn't stop there.

"When is Lindsay coming out of the closet? We all know you're Gay, Lindsey," Loomer continued on X. "And that's ok. It's ok. It's 2024. There's nothing wrong with Gay people. I like men too. You and I have something in common we can bond over. Just be honest about it. Nobody is going to

judge you for being open about who you are."

This is coming from a woman who isn't exactly an LGBTQ+ ally, to say the least. Her Loomered website is littered with stories about drag queens being a threat to children, attacks on transgender student athletes and claims that public schools are indoctrinating children.

Whether Graham is gay or not really doesn't matter at this point. I mean, his voting record is staunchly anti-gay, so people have been trying to out him for a very long time in order to prove that he's a hypocrite. But Republicans truly do not care about being hypocrites and neither do their supporters.

Of course, that's not why Loomer is bringing it up. She's trolling him. That's what she does.

You may recall that before Trump was elected in 2016, he said that he would hire "the best people." He continued to claim that he only hired the best people throughout his disastrous four-year term, during which he fired people and people quit left and right. It was obvious to anyone paying attention that Trump did not, in fact, hire the best people.

Imagine now what a second Trump term would look like. The people in his administration will be people like Loomer. People who are first and foremost loyal to Trump, secondly hate the same people he does, and thirdly, who are willing to do whatever it takes to hurt those people.

And guess what? If you're reading this, chances are good you're one of those people. We cannot give this man and his "best people" another four years (or more, considering he wants to be a dictator) in the White House. The result will be bad blood that we won't be able to shake off.



THE SCROLL

QUICK HITS & CAN'T MISSES

Equality Michigan Releases 2024 Endorsements

Equality Michigan Action Network has announced its 2024 endorsements for local and state election races. The endorsements include candidates “who have a proven track record of supporting equal rights and legal protections for LGBTQ+ Michiganders,” an Equality Michigan announcement reads. “We remain committed to endorsing and supporting openly LGBTQ+ and pro-equality candidates — up and down the ballot — who will fight for civil rights and social justice in our state.”

Southeast Michigan endorsements include Regina Weiss (MI-5), Natalie Price (MI-6), Helena Scott (MI-8), Veronica Paiz (MI-10), Donovan McKinney (MI-11), Kimberly

Edwards (MI-12), Mai Xiong (MI-13), Mike McFall (MI-14), Erin Byrnes (MI-15), Laurie Pohutsky (MI-17), Jason Hoskins (MI-18), Matt Koleszar (MI-22), Jason Morgan (MI-23), Ranjeev Puri (MI-24), Dylan Wegela (MI-26), Jaime Churches (MI-27), Janise O’Neil Robinson (MI-28), Kyle Wright (MI-29), Reggie Miller (MI-31), Jimmie Wilson, Jr. (MI-32), Morgan Foreman (MI-33), Kerry Tapper (MI-39), Jennifer Conlin (MI-48), Andy Wood (MI-49), Shadia Martini (MI-54), Trevis Harrold (MI-55), Sharon MacDonell (MI-56), Aisha Farooqi (MI-57), Denise Mentzer (MI-61), Michelle Levine-Woodman (MI-62) and John Anter (MI-64).

Equality Michigan endorses Justice Kyra Harris Bolden and Kimberly Ann Thomas for the Michigan Supreme Court. Find the full list, including circuit court and county-level endorsements, at [equalitymiaction.org](https://equalitymiaction.org).



No Need for Mpox Boosters, Says CDC

As mpox cases rise in Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, concerns about waning immunity have sparked discussions in the U.S., especially within the men who have sex with men (MSM) community, which was heavily impacted by the 2022 outbreak. Despite this, the CDC does not currently recommend mpox vaccine boosters in the U.S.

The Jynneos vaccine, given in two doses, was key in controlling the 2022 outbreak that saw over 30,000 cases, primarily among MSM. While there are concerns that immunity may decline over time, experts like Dr. Ashish Jha emphasize that boosters aren’t necessary at this time. “We don’t have enough data to recommend boosters for everyone who got vaccinated,” Jha told CNN, noting that even if immunity wanes, vaccinated individuals are less likely to experience severe illness.

Mpox vaccines are available at local health departments, clinics and Affirmations in Ferndale. Enter your zip code at [mpoxvaccine.cdc.gov](https://mpoxvaccine.cdc.gov) to find an mpox vaccination site near you.



MiGen’s Angela Gabridge on National Senior Center Month

September is National Senior Center Month, a time to highlight the importance of resources for seniors. MiGen, Michigan’s first LGBTQ+ senior organization, opened a new center in January inside Affirmations in Ferndale, offering support and services tailored to LGBTQ+ elders.

MiGen Executive Director Angela Gabridge emphasized the need for these spaces, as LGBTQ+ seniors are often overlooked. “Much of the support for

LGBTQ+ communities is focused on youth,” Gabridge explained. “Our older adults have been navigating discrimination all their lives.”

MiGen’s collaboration with Affirmations allows for an innovative approach, providing LGBTQ+ seniors with access to a range of programs in a welcoming environment. “Having a physical space has been transformational,” said Gabridge. “The level of engagement is way up, and we’re responding directly to the community’s needs.”

For LGBTQ+ seniors, MiGen offers more than resources — it’s a safe, inclusive space where they can truly feel seen and supported. Learn more at [migenconnect.org](https://migenconnect.org).

Head North for Mackinac Island Pride

Take an impromptu trip up north Sept. 19-22 to celebrate Pride in Island style — Mackinac Island style, that is. Take part in the festive Pride Ride bike tour, enjoy a Pride boat cruise along the Straits of Mackinac and find out why this sometimes-overlooked region of our state has Pride to spare. Visit [straitspride.org](https://straitspride.org) for the itinerary.

See Lava La Rue in Royal Oak

Don’t miss the magic of up-and-coming pop sensation Lava La Rue, when they perform Sept. 20 at Royal Oak Music Theatre. La Rue will open for Remi Wolf with a performance that has the singer taking on the persona of Starface, an intergalactic being who’s been sent to Earth to study and help humanity — essentially, La Rue is a lesbian version of Ziggy Stardust. Catch La Rue before they blow up a la Chappell Roan! For more info: [lavalarue.ffm.to/starface](https://lavalarue.ffm.to/starface).

Ellen DeGeneres Performs Last Comedy Special

Set to premiere Sept. 24 on Netflix, “Ellen DeGeneres: For Your Approval” will mark the final comedy special of the groundbreaking lesbian comic’s storied career. The show will touch on DeGeneres’ life after she was “kicked out of show business,” according to press materials.



Ellen DeGeneres.  
Photo: Netflix





## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Catching Up with Rev. Darlene Franklin

BY LIAM CLYMER

*Our “Where Are They Now?” series will get you up-to-date on the lives of LGBTQ+ community advocates who have contributed to Michigan with years of tireless activism before embarking on new chapters, whether in retirement or pursuit of fresh opportunities elsewhere. In this space, we’ll trace the paths of these trailblazers as they navigate life beyond the limelight, offering insights into their current endeavors, passions and the legacies they continue to shape. Join us as we celebrate their resilience, achievements and the lasting impact they’ve left on Michigan’s LGBTQ+ community.*

### How would you describe your connection to Michigan, and what were some of your proudest moments while working here?

A year after being honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force, at Beale AFB in Sacramento, and leaving a troubled marriage, I arrived in Mount Clemens, Michigan in 1985 with two daughters under 5 years of age. From 1985 to 1990, I spent those years working odd jobs, living in the closet by day and hanging at the gay bars at night, while taking my children to the Missionary Baptist Church on Wednesdays and Sundays.

In 1990, things changed. I was hired at the newly opened domestic violence shelter in Detroit, My Sister’s Place, in the position of house manager, organizing residential safe spaces and food provisions for abused women and their children. I worked there from 1990 to 1992. The shelter housed the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which added to my duties of overseeing the maintenance of the 24-hour crisis line and the training of the staff to provide connections to safe spaces across the country and maintaining the database of resources and referrals. The journey continued when I was hired at AIDS Partnership of Michigan as coordinator of the Michigan HIV/AIDS Statewide Information Hotline from 1993 to 1998.

From there, the winds of change began to blow and I became unemployed and found myself without a church home. I came out to my children on a Tuesday and the next day, in the 12 p.m. prayer service, the

leader announced in front of my daughter that “all homosexuals are going to hell.” I never returned to that church.

In November of 1998, I joined Full Truth Fellowship of Christ Church and became ordained as a deacon in the Unity Fellowship Church Movement. By 2001, I had been ordained as the senior pastor under Rev. Dr. Renee McCoy and served in that position from 2001 to 2010. During that time, we provided spiritual counseling, worship services and programs to support those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as connecting with and supporting other community services and agencies. I founded Getting the Word Out Center for Biblical Studies where I and nine others received degrees in theology granted through Destiny School of Ministry Roseville, Michigan. I was also the first openly gay pastor to host a Christian radio show, “Getting the Word Out,” on 1440 WMKM in Detroit.

### What has your path looked like since moving on from Full Truth Fellowship Church?

My journey since leaving Full Truth has been nothing short of amazing and was not without its challenges. From 2010 to 2023, I was on a spiritual journey, trying to find myself while helping others to do the same. I returned to complete my education, earning a master’s degree in social work at Wayne State University. From there, I was hired at Hegira Health Inc. in 2018, where I continue to work remotely part time, providing mental health and substance abuse counseling.

My purpose in life has always been to serve — especially those

Few know the power of faith to empower and support more than Rev. Darlene Franklin. Throughout her professional career, Franklin has worn many hats. Be it as a pastor, an HIV/AIDS hotline coordinator or a domestic violence shelter worker, Franklin’s work was clearly defined by a call to service.

Through coming face to face with her own identity and finding a disconnect between her ideals and what was being preached at local churches, Franklin found her voice for LGBTQ+ advocacy. A voice that, even as the backdrop of her life has changed, has remained unwavering in ringing out for those pushed aside.

who live on the margins of society. Full Truth started me on the journey to awakening from within and accepting myself just as I am. It is my intent and continued life’s passion to assist as many as I can to embrace themselves as the magnificent human beings that they are purposed to be.

### What was the importance of having Full Truth Fellowship Church as a welcoming space in the ‘90s?

Having this space was a refuge and salvation for a lot of people and not just for the LGBT community. It came about at the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and Detroit was hit the hardest. Families were losing loved ones at a rapid rate. The founder and co-pastor of the Full Truth during those times were eulogizing people every week.

People were being kicked out of their homes and churches for being gay or infected with HIV, and Full Truth was there with the message and spirit demonstrating that “God is love and love is for everybody.” All were welcomed and embraced. People were served and cared for, fed and provided for, at the Monday night Empowerment Meals. The Full Truth Choir sang songs of hope and celebration not only in service, but to support other community events like Hotter Than July, Candlelight Vigils and more. The spirit of Full Truth Fellowship of Christ Church was, and still is, a lighthouse to those who seek to find their way. And that light continues to exist under the leadership of pastors who

were ordained at Full Truth and moved on to create other ministries.

### From your perspective, what role should a pastor serve in their community?

The pastor’s role is to preach truth. The truth is that the will of God is that we all be and live in health, wealth, prosperity, joy, harmony and well-being. That is what Jesus came to proclaim and exemplify; he did not come to be worshiped, but to proclaim the good news that we would all come to know that we are unified with God in spirit, we are not wretches, we were not “shaped in iniquity or conceived in sin.” We are unique and individualized expressions and made with the same nature as God and embody the same spirit and made in the same image. With that truth we serve, and with that truth, we proclaim and empower people. Empowered people will stand for justice and equality.

### Where are you now?

I married my wife of 16 years legally in Michigan — we were one of the first 300 to do so in Michigan. We currently live in Dallas, Texas. We have created Soul-Full Purpose LLC, which is an umbrella for several organizations created for spiritual and health and wellness coaching. Our newest business is Besties Vegan Bliss, a bakery creating delightful vegan and gluten-free desserts.

*This interview has been condensed and reformatted for publication purposes.*



# Call Me By My Name

For Josef Greenberg, they realized they were making things easier for everyone but themselves



BY JOSEF GREENBERG

Because of my profession in communication, pronouns are a necessary evil.

I consider myself transmasculine and uncomfortable with she/her pronouns. And even as someone who cut my teeth in newsrooms, the “they” debate by some journalists — that they is too imprecise and confusing for people to grasp as a pronoun — is tired and fruitless. I won’t entertain it, and promise “they” works if you can manage to suspend disbelief.

Recently, I tried he/him pronouns on for size, and they didn’t fit. Of course, I came to this realization after I made a big splash at work announcing my name and

pronouns to great pomp and circumstance. Backing out and reclaiming a different set of descriptors has been a bit like rolling through molasses and a lot like relief.

The first time I was asked about my pronouns in a professional setting was a year ago during an emergency response drill in northern Michigan. Press was present for the exercise, and a reporter whom I deeply admired pulled me aside and asked what pronouns I was going by. The question surprised me as I had not given it much thought before that moment.

“They/them works,” I told him. “When all else fails, just say my name. I promise I’ll answer.”

This marked the first of many hilarious and uncomfortable conversations, with colleagues and friends. I found myself

See **Pronoun Pressure**, page 21

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# How This Nonbinary Michigan Artist's Sculpture Reflects a Life in Bloom

Quinn Faylor is exploring a new artistic horizon during Detroit Month of Design

BY JORDYN BRADLEY

A super bloom is a phenomenon where an abundance of wildflowers blossom in the desert simultaneously. These events are rare and often symbolize transformation.

For Quinn Faylor, a 29-year-old Detroit-based non-binary artist, that unique blossoming also symbolizes their life and how they see themselves as an artist.

“During a super bloom, so many things will blossom that usually, in a normal season, you would never see. So it’s how the land responds and is overflowing with abundance. And for me, this feels like the point of blossoming and letting everything you’ve worked toward reveal itself,” Faylor tells BTL.

Faylor considers themselves a painter, printmaker and muralist. Recently, though, Faylor decided to try their hand at a new medium: sculpture.

Their exhibit, “Super Bloom,” is currently on showcase at Playground Detroit through Oct. 5 as part of Detroit Month of Design. “Super Bloom” is an exhibition of meticulously crafted 3D sculptures and paintings created in “abundant and saturated colors that are grounded in what feels good to me,” says Faylor.

Faylor says the piece, which they created through processes including computer numerical control (CNC) and lap joinery manufacturing that they learned themselves, symbolizes the exploration of self through the modular shapes and the use of no hardware, representing balance and trust within your own body.

“Emotionally, the body of work is very much an extension of myself and inspired by relationships in my life as I



Quinn Faylor. Photo: Derek Juntunen

See **Quinn Faylor**, page 20



# **LGBTQ Rights and Respect Have Been Strengthened by the Michigan Supreme Court**

As the guardian of justice, fairness, and freedoms in our state, the Michigan Supreme Court plays an essential role in ensuring equality for all. This year, Michigan voters get to choose who fills two spots on the Michigan Supreme Court, and we all have a civic duty to vote for the two candidates we think will make the best decisions on behalf of all citizens.

The LGBTQ community has been granted important civil rights by the Michigan Supreme Court. It's no secret that members of this community still face discrimination, but recent decisions by Michigan's highest court have helped secure important protections against bias and unfair treatment for LGBTQ folks.

The Michigan Supreme Court ruled in 2022 that the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, a law enacted in 1976, bans firing, evicting, or discriminating against someone in any way because they are a member of the LGBTQ community. Advocates worked for many years to get this case before the Michigan Supreme Court, which ruled that the law's ban on discrimination based on the basis of sex includes sexual orientation.

In 2023, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that judges must use the preferred pronouns of defendants, litigants, attorneys, and others in the courtroom. The Michigan Supreme Court was the first in the nation to require this change through court rules, which respects the dignity of all people. In fact, although the ruling especially impacts transgender and nonbinary folks, it also respects those who choose not to recognize people's preferred pronouns, allowing them to refer to "the defendant" or "the plaintiff." This is the kind of fairness and equity all Michiganders deserve.

Although these rulings were specific to the LGBTQ community, the Michigan Supreme Court makes decisions on critical issues that impact everyone. This includes civil rights for all, as well as environmental regulations, criminal justice, economic regulations, and more. In fact, the Michigan Supreme Court is the ultimate decider on the most complex and consequential cases in our state.

The two candidates who win their elections this year will have a major voice in how Michigan's future unfolds, along with the rest of the seven-person court. Each justice is elected for eight-year terms, which means your vote will help shape the future of our state for years to come.

Michigan is one of only 24 states that empowers the people to vote for their state Supreme Court. It's a big responsibility, so it's important to do your homework about the candidates so you know which two best reflect your values and the kind of Michigan you want to live in.

But you have to do more than your homework. You must manually select your two choices for the open seats on the Michigan Supreme Court. Feel free to vote a straight-party ticket – but don't stop there. Look for the non-partisan section of your ballot. That's where you'll find the candidates for the Michigan Supreme Court. They're nominated by a political party, but their affiliation is not listed on the ballot.

Don't miss your chance to play a role in making sure the Michigan Supreme Court is made up of qualified justices who will put the best interests of everyday Michiganders first – no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, or any other aspect of their lives. Choose candidates with integrity and a strong track record of fairness and justice for all.

Get more information about the Michigan Supreme Court, the voting process, and how to tell others about the importance of voting for the people who will sit on our state's highest court. Visit [www.MISupremeCourtRocks.com](http://www.MISupremeCourtRocks.com) to find everything you need to make an educated decision on your ballot in November.

-Erin Knott, Equality Michigan Executive Director





# ‘We All Need a Will’

After Will Ferrell’s longtime friend Harper Steele came out as trans in 2021, he wanted to better understand her, so they took a road trip



Harper Steele and Will Ferrell. Photo: Netflix

**BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI**

The influence of softhearted straight male allies for the LGBTQ+ community is gaining momentum in the era of Tim Walz. We can now count universally beloved comic actor Will Ferrell among those heterosexual men who, confident in their own identities, use their platforms to support and uplift marginalized groups.

Ferrell leads by example in “Will & Harper,” a documentary that emerged after his friend of 30 years, Harper Steele, came out as transgender in 2021 after decades spent in the closet. Ferrell

and Steele met while working on “Saturday Night Live” — Steele as head writer for four years, and Ferrell as a main cast member from 1995 until 2002. Eventually, the two worked together at *Funny or Die*, where Steele was creative director, and Ferrell acted in two films she co-wrote: the Spanish-language comedy-western “Casa de mi Padre” and 2020’s “Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga.”

Now, in “Will & Harper,” directed by Josh Greenbaum (“Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar”) and coming to Netflix on Sept. 27, the two set out on a cross-country road trip, where Steele seeks to explore her identity

in a country that doesn’t always embrace her. “I love it so much,” she says early in the film about the U.S. “I just don’t know if it loves me back right now.”

Meanwhile, Ferrell, who told *Variety* earlier this year when the film debuted at Sundance that he had “zero knowledge” about the trans community, aims to deepen his understanding of his friend’s journey. On their own, the widespread appeal of Ferrell’s films such as “Old School,” “Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy” and “Step Brothers” suggests that “Will & Harper” could attract a diverse range of potential allies who may be unsure where to begin. If there’s a lesson

here, it might be that allyship can start in something as simple as a station wagon.

In a video interview with Ferrell and Steele during the film’s premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, Ferrell was genuinely moved just knowing he might make a difference. “Oh, that’s so nice,” he said, after I mentioned the significance of him being a queer-supportive straight guy who models sensitivity and unconditional love, admitting I felt like I was lacking men like him growing up.

But it was Steele who truly understood: “We all need a Will,” she added, leaning into her buddy during our interview, their

decades of friendship on display in one brief, heartfelt embrace.

**As of now, Will, how aware are you that this film might influence your fans’ perspectives and foster compassion toward trans individuals?**

**Will Ferrell:** I think we’re getting a sense of that. I mean, it’s something, once Harper said, “OK, you know what? Let’s do it,” that was probably the second part of the conversation — that she

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See **Will & Harper**, page 24



# *Fight Night*

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## Quinn Faylor

Continued from page 16

consider them acts of fantasy, acts of voice, acts of body and how we as queer people can find ways of inhabiting our body and connecting with others that maybe we've never seen modeled before," they say.

As Faylor's partner, David McGuffie has witnessed her personal and artistic evolution firsthand and says "Super Bloom" is a clear representation of Faylor and who they are as an artist right now.

"This body of work represents a specific side of Quinn that is currently in bloom. It's a beautiful thing to see translated into this medium," he says. McGuffie also says the movement within the piece feels like a celebration of dance, another artistic medium Faylor uses for self-expression.

"Super Bloom" consists of 23 pieces, each containing multiple shapes within it, making it an "assemblage of continuous parts." Faylor says the totality of the work mirrors life.

"There are so many chapters and parts inside me, inspired by being queer, moving through my own gender journey, and how that is kind of an undulating state. It presents itself in different ways on different days, and I'm just trying to move toward a soft, resilient space inside myself where things don't have to be fixed," says Faylor.

Faylor is a self-taught artist who grew up in Petoskey and always felt drawn to abundance in nature, whether it was in the woods or near the shore of Lake Michigan. After graduating from the University of Michigan in 2016, they moved to Detroit to chase the nourishing feeling art gave them.

"Art was always the thing that made me feel the best," they say. Through college, Faylor made collages and painted on t-shirts as a reprieve. When they realized art made them feel better than anything else, they decided to pursue it intentionally.

While Southeastern and Northern Michigan can feel like a world away from each other, Faylor says living in Detroit has taught them how to notice more.

"There's an abundance of nature here as well; it just looks a little different," they say. "I'm now noticing

\$5,000 to support their artistic endeavors. Faylor says without the fellowship, "Super Bloom" may not have come together.

"Being self-taught, I don't really know how the big world of art galleries operates. Having professional mentorship will be really major for



Quinn Faylor in the studio. Photo: Derek Juntunen

what is growing in the sidewalk cracks or in the field across from my house. Michigan is very much in my bones, and Detroit is where I've really come into myself."

Faylor appreciates that Detroit as a city supports the arts. There are spaces and communities eager to celebrate art and support people pursuing their passions. Detroit is even where Faylor says they remember seeing a large-scale mural for the first time.

Since then, Faylor has created various murals across Michigan, as well as in San Francisco and Tokyo. In 2022, they were an artist-in-residence with the Glen Arbor Arts Center and the Salt Spring Arts Council in Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. They were also an artist-in-residence with City Walls in Detroit from 2022-2023.

Now, Faylor is one of Playground Detroit's 2024 recipients of the Emerging Artist Fellowship, which brings emerging local artists mentorship opportunities and offers

me because I haven't had that before. But this art show wouldn't have been possible without the fellowship. It's so cool to have Playground Detroit believe in this piece. It's validating that others wanted to see it exist, so I'm very grateful for that," says Faylor.

Playground Detroit director Paulina Petkoski says the contemporary art gallery is excited to see Faylor using a new-to-them technique to explore who they are as an artist.

"It feels like a critical point in Quinn's career where they're exploring a new medium and three-dimensional work, and the fellowship prioritizes supporting artists at a critical point in their careers," says Petkoski.

Faylor says working on this piece feels like a jumping off point into a new world and point of view.

"I'm trying my best," says Faylor, "but I think it is significant and it's nice to just be myself and feel safe enough to be myself."



stumbling over my words, confused by how I could be so disoriented discussing ... myself.

First dates turned into Achilles' heels. One woman I was anxious to impress somehow sat through my blathering about the politics of pronouns, along with a five-minute post-dinner voicemail justifying my struggle, before texting me the next morning to say she was going to pass on a second date.

Looking back, who could blame her? There's something really unattractive about indecisiveness. In all honesty, a lot of things tanked the date. But still. Not knowing one's self is an obvious red flag, even if it's me I'm talking about. As they say, it's not a good look, babe.

I learned early in my professional career that pronoun politics are fierce — and fluid.

At the beginning of my friendship with the late transgender author and pronoun pioneer Leslie Feinberg, I asked Leslie for their preferred pronouns. Leslie told me to use hir and sie, but that when it came down to it, none of these really mattered.

This sentiment was echoed by Leslie's widow, author and activist Minnie Bruce Pratt, when she released a statement after Leslie's death. "She preferred to use the pronouns she/

zie and her/hir for herself, but also said: 'I care which pronoun is used, but people have been respectful to me with the wrong pronoun and disrespectful with the right one. It matters whether someone is using the pronoun as a bigot, or if they are trying to demonstrate respect.'"

*“My personal life is complex. I recently started to use testosterone in an effort to align my body and mind, while chopping away at body dysphoria. Assigned female at birth, I have always felt agender, without gender. But because I present as transmasculine — the longer I am on T, the more that will continue to shine — I also began to think he/him pronouns would be easier on everyone involved.”*

Leslie's words continue to resonate deep within me. And historically have given me great pause when pinned to declare a pronoun.

Recently, a quote I gave to a newspaper was widely misinterpreted

because it used the “they” pronoun in a way that lacked specificity. The sentence structure allowed it to be read as either a personal pronoun or the organization I was representing. It forced my needle, and I temporarily chose he/him pronouns for professional reasons. But I felt too much of my life remains under construction, and for now he/him pronouns don't capture all those complexities. For now, those assumptions and interpretations belong solely to me.

And my personal life is complex. I recently started to use testosterone in an effort to align my body and mind, while chopping away at body dysphoria. Assigned female at birth, I have always felt agender, without gender. But because I present as transmasculine — the longer I am on T, the more that will continue to shine — I also began to think he/him pronouns would be easier on everyone involved.

But again, I was caught up in making things easier for everyone but myself.

Boxes have never served me well. And pronouns feel perilously adjacent to that space. So I am leaning into fluidity. I'm realizing it's

all a process, but this is my process. I simply hope journalists, family and friends will do their best to respect my wishes and use descriptors that make sense to me.

Or better yet, no pronoun at all. You can just call me by my name.

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**Our Own Worst Enemy**  
Puzzle can be found on page 29


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## ◀ LGBTQ+ Courses

Continued from page 9

suppression we're facing and the liberation we're moving towards."

Schwab said that while the nature of their classroom is collaborative, their own queer experience provides intention and understanding as they navigate wide-ranging conversations. "Higher education can be a hard place to navigate for anybody, but I think as someone from the LGBTQ+ community, I have a stronger sense of how students may feel isolated," Schwab said. "Whether it be in the classroom or they come from a conservative hometown, I think the queer experience helps."

"I'm very happy we were able to bring back the course and that I was able to be a part of it as a young queer teacher," Schwab added. "These are the issues that are really important to me and I know are really important to the students."

Philosophy and communication sophomore Jason Folk had Schwab for a previous class and is currently enrolled in the the LGBTQ+ communications course. Folk said that their background in communications mixed with Schwab's carefully curated environments made taking this course an "obvious choice."

"As an openly queer person, we are faced with these sort of interactions, whether pro or anti, on a daily basis," Folk said. "This was what was so enlightening to me about communications in the first place — when you get an explanation of these everyday phenomena and how they interact with us, it just allows us to basically interact and understand the world in which we live in better."

Folk said a course like this shows LGBTQ+ individuals varying viewpoints that allow them to live their lives with more safety and understanding. "So often simply talking about being queer is, if not criminalized, just frowned upon or just doesn't take place," Folk said. "Being able to unwrap the sort of rhetoric that queer people face every single day both internally and externally and get that explanation of why things are the way they are, I think ultimately is going to be extraordinarily enlightening."

Knowledge offers a defense against bigotry and fear, they noted. "When you're a young queer person the world seems terrifying," they said. "But being able to understand the background processes of the way it works, ultimately, as a queer person, both brings me more comfort and security in the world we live in but also a greater ability to interact within that system."



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Will Ferrell and Harper Steele on their road trip. Photo: Netflix

## ◀ Will & Harper

Continued from page 18

articulated the fact that this is something that will help [her], but she brought up the great point of exposing that part of my audience that maybe wouldn't be inclined to even investigate anything like this. I think that's really exciting. I think that's really exciting that that is a potential. And yeah, I've already gotten feedback that, I would say, a surprising segment of my audience that you wouldn't have thought would have any interest is really interested in watching this.

### **Considering how some of your fans may feel about the trans community, did it feel like a risk to make this film?**

**Harper Steele:** I don't think Will cares about that sort of risk. That's what I think. I brought that up early. Again, I brought up many times that Will is a brand as well as a human being. Bud Light did not fare well when they associated themselves with a trans person. But I don't think that enters into Will's mindset at all, really.

**Ferrell:** This is the advantage when you're at the tail end of your career and you're just

coasting. [Laughs.]

**Steele:** [Deadpans.] He wouldn't have done it, I guess.

**Ferrell:** [Sarcastically joking] Oh, no. Even a year ago, two years ago, I wouldn't have done it. I was hot! I think in the most healthy way, once I make a decision, I don't look back. Whether that's a bizarre comedic premise or, whatever it is, even in my day to day. This was another case of, OK, there's going to be a positive response and a negative response. Whatever potential fallout that could be directed my way, I'm not really concerned. I'm not concerned at all.

**To me, you are like the Tim Walz of cinema. We've got Will and we've got Tim standing up for the LGBTQ+ community. Harper, I was wondering if you could talk about how you feel about men like Will, and even Gov. Walz, both of whom embody a positive example of**

*“I think this is a great example of allyship. And it's a funny movie, so maybe we can bring people in with that laughter and illustrate that allyship.”*

— Harper Steele

### **tender masculinity that challenges the traditional notions of toxic masculinity.**

**Steele:** I'm not positive that it's a new phenomenon. In fact, I almost think toxic masculinity is a newer phenomenon. I think people are threatened by trans people, by queer people, by women, and so this sort of toxic nature has grown a little bit out of this. I think the basic component is men who are not threatened by something they're hiding themselves maybe, or something that they're afraid of, or that is unknown. They are generally good people and they don't

either care about me or they'd like to meet me and talk to me. Almost all of the men in my life who are straight cis men are the kinds of people who are comfortable with being themselves. I'm not going to say this about every toxic male, that they're not comfortable being themselves. I do think that that kind of mentality, as women's rights grew and as more queer people became present, the unknown

and the scariness of that seemed to ratchet up.

### **How do you think telling stories like this one can shape American attitudes toward trans individuals and potentially impact pro-trans versus anti-trans legislation?**

**Steele:** For us, I think it's just a hope. I'm not sure we are confident that we can. But for me personally, and I won't speak for Will, to lead by example is the way to get to that change. I'm not super strident, though I can be. I



think this is a great example of allyship. And it's a funny movie, so maybe we can bring people in with that laughter and illustrate that allyship.

**Ferrell:** We talk about the email that Harper sent where she came out, and then there was a follow-up in which she said, "Look, I'm not a very political person, but just by nature of being trans, I'm now a political person in a way. I just ask you as my friends to stand up for me. Do your best to, if I'm misgendered, just speak up on my behalf, that's all I ask." This was the light bulb moment for me: "Oh, if I'm really going to walk the walk here, maybe this is a way to do that and we could have a great time, and it would also be educational for me." Just be that — lead by example. Show that civility still exists out there, not only between ourselves, but in the way we're engaging with the world.

**If there were to be a sequel, where do you envision you'd go together next?**

**Ferrell:** I mean, where do you want to go? Saint-Tropez or something?

**Steele:** Saint-Tropez, or I was thinking space.

**Ferrell:** Oh, space. Maybe space! Maybe we get stuck in space the same way these two astronauts' eight-day trip has now turned

into 80 days, or something like that.

**Steele:** Yeah, we'll be up there.

**Looking back on the beginning of your friendship, is there a specific "SNL" sketch that you both worked on together that significantly strengthened your bond and brought you closer together?**

**Steele:** It's a fraught environment. He was always fucking my sketches up.


**Ferrell:** On purpose. I [was] like, "I'm going to fix your wagon."

**Steele:** I was like, "This dumb actor." No. [Laughs.]


**Ferrell:** You have to remember, there's so much failure on that show that the bonding really comes from trying stuff at the rewrite table and getting the laugh in the room, but the host hated it, so it never got picked.

**Steele:** Yeah, all the bonding happens with, like, "I love your sketch." "I love yours." Neither one of us is doing those sketches.

**Ferrell:** But let's all go have a beer. I don't think there was that lightbulb moment, that one sketch where we both were like, "That was so great." But you get to know and trust and love each other through the process.



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## ◀ Judge Ryan

Continued from page 6

daughter who was molested and another who was physically abused. “Judge Hayes took away my life and didn’t care how my children suffered,” Johnson told Reuters. “My girls will never be the same.”

In 2017, Hayes wound up answering to Alabama’s Judicial Inquiry Commission, which found that he had broken state and federal laws by jailing residents too poor to pay fines, including, Reuters reports, “a plumber struggling to make rent, a mother who skipped meals to cover the medical bills of her disabled son, and a hotel housekeeper working her way through college.” Hayes admitted to violating 10 different portions of Alabama’s judicial conduct code and acknowledged that he had failed the most essential of all judicial duties, to “respect and comply with the law.”

Surely, then, Hayes received fair justice. Maybe some jail time?

Nah. Hayes wasn’t barred from judicial service. He served an 11-month unpaid suspension and returned to the bench in 2018, where he continued to serve until his taxpayer-funded retirement in 2020.

We can’t let the same scenario play out when it comes to Judge Ryan, especially if it becomes apparent that her personal bigotry

has influenced decisions she has made in cases impacting Oakland County families. Implore the Michigan Supreme Court (email [MSC\\_Clerk@courts.mi.gov](mailto:MSC_Clerk@courts.mi.gov)) to keep the avowed racist and homophobe off the bench. The good news is that even if Ryan is allowed to return to her role, county probate court judges are elected in Michigan. Vote her out if she runs for reelection to the 2028 term.

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— Oakland County Executive  
Dave Coulter

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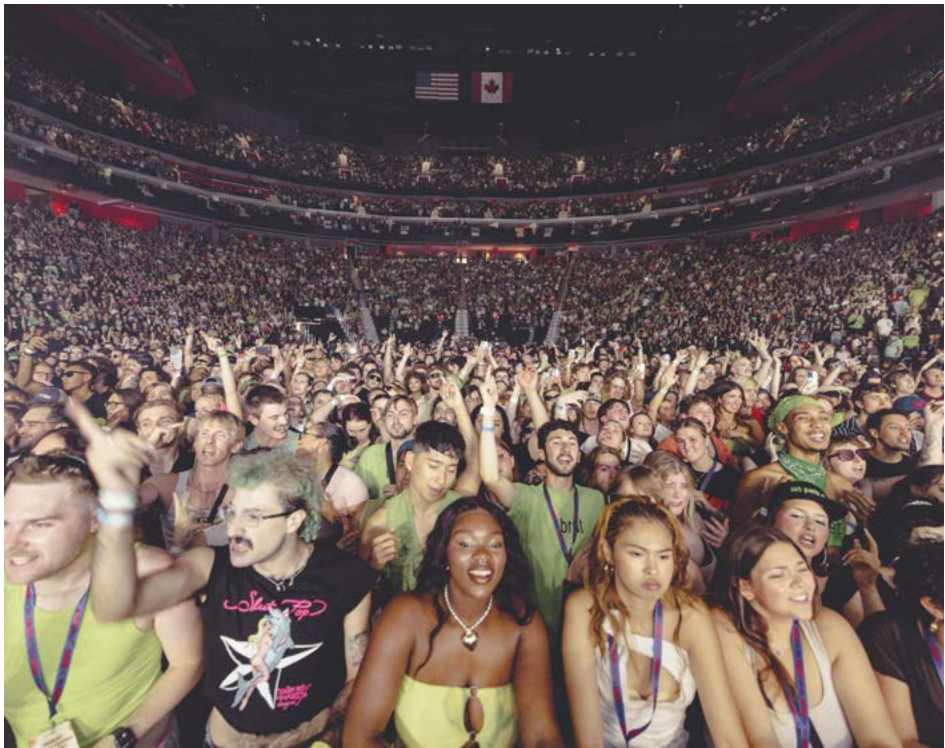
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Sweat
Continued from page 10

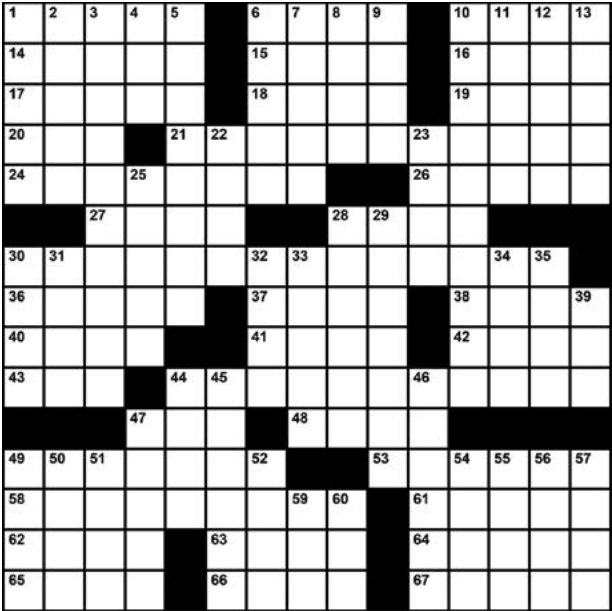
stage, initially hyping each other up before fully teaming up for performances of “1999” and “Talk Talk.” Both artists reached back beyond material from the “Brat” album and Sivan’s 2023 release “Something to Give Each Other.” Charli XCX’s “Boys” made an appearance, and she playfully called out to the crowd with, “Where all my gay boys at?” Troye Sivan’s “Bloom,” a song about bottoming, felt right at home with this crowd.

Meanwhile, Charli XCX brought an audacious energy and fearless, anything-goes attitude that perfectly embodied “brat” — the summer trend even noticed by Presidential nominee Kamala Harris. Charli transformed “brat” into a bold dance statement. Amid a sea of hand-bumping, unapologetic brats, the term evolved into a vibrant queer movement celebrating nonconformity, unabashed sexuality and self-expression. Lime wasn’t just a color worn on the outside; it was a palpable, electrifying feeling. That night, that color alone — and I’d go as far to say so many of us — came alive in new ways.



A sea of brats getting bratty with Troye Sivan and Charli XCX. Photos: Henry Redcliffe





Across

Our Own Worst Enemy

- 1 Beaver State capital
- 6 Balls of brass
- 10 End of a Beatles song title
- 14 Sal Mineo's "Rebel Without a Cause" role
- 15 Comics canine

- 16 Longtime NFL coach Chuck
- 17 Place to become husband and husband
- 18 When it's hard to get up
- 19 "Star Trek" counselor Deanna
- 20 Neither companion
- 21 Start of a quote by 61-Across
- 24 Spectate at the Oscars?
- 26 "\_\_\_ my case!" (Perry Mason's close)
- 27 Small vessel
- 28 Use the Divine Miss M's name in vain?
- 30 More of the quote

- 36 PR concern
- 37 "Hold your horses!"
- 38 Heart of the matter
- 40 Honey holders
- 41 Buffalo's lake
- 42 Went lickety-split
- 43 FICA funds it
- 44 More of the quote
- 47 GOP event
- 48 "A Boy Named Sue" writer Silverstein
- 49 Bodybuilder Charles with a map book?
- 53 Lifeboat lifters
- 58 End of the quote
- 61 Representative Baldwin
- 62 Top-flight
- 63 Cole Porter's "You'd Be So \_\_\_ to Love"
- 64 To eat, to Ulrichs
- 65 Testicles
- 66 Timetable, for short
- 67 Douglas' co-star in "Basic Instinct"

Down

- 1 Goes across
- 2 Mete out
- 3 Verdi's tragedy of a fallen woman
- 4 Sappho's long E
- 5 Two women buying a house may have one
- 6 Addams Family dad
- 7 Be nuts over
- 8 Old Italian money
- 9 Glinda portrayer in "The Wiz"
- 10 What a star-crossed couple

- does?
- 11 Rich oral pleasure with nuts
- 12 Goes down on
- 13 George, who was Mary Ann
- 22 Dutch painter Frans
- 23 Global domination game
- 25 Where boxers are visible
- 28 Islamic VIP
- 29 Put into words
- 30 Part of an actor's pay between parts?
- 31 Med. care providers
- 32 Prefix for logical, for Rev. Jane Spahr
- 33 Some musicians pluck them
- 34 Boy with a bow who shot your beau
- 35 Simple partner
- 39 Crossed through, with "out"
- 44 Bear of the night
- 45 Public outbursts
- 46 Tickles pink
- 47 Tom, Dick, and Harry
- 49 \_\_\_ all-time high
- 50 Pronoun for King James
- 51 Fasting time
- 52 Neighbor of Mont.
- 54 Bottomless
- 55 Britney Spears' "\_\_\_ Curious"
- 56 Counterfeiters' nemeses
- 57 "Auld Lang \_\_\_"
- 59 Milk, in a way
- 60 Barrett of Pink Floyd

See p. 21 for answers

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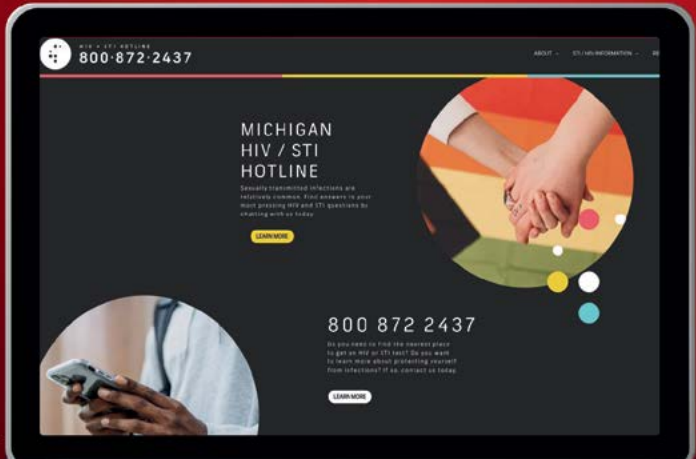
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